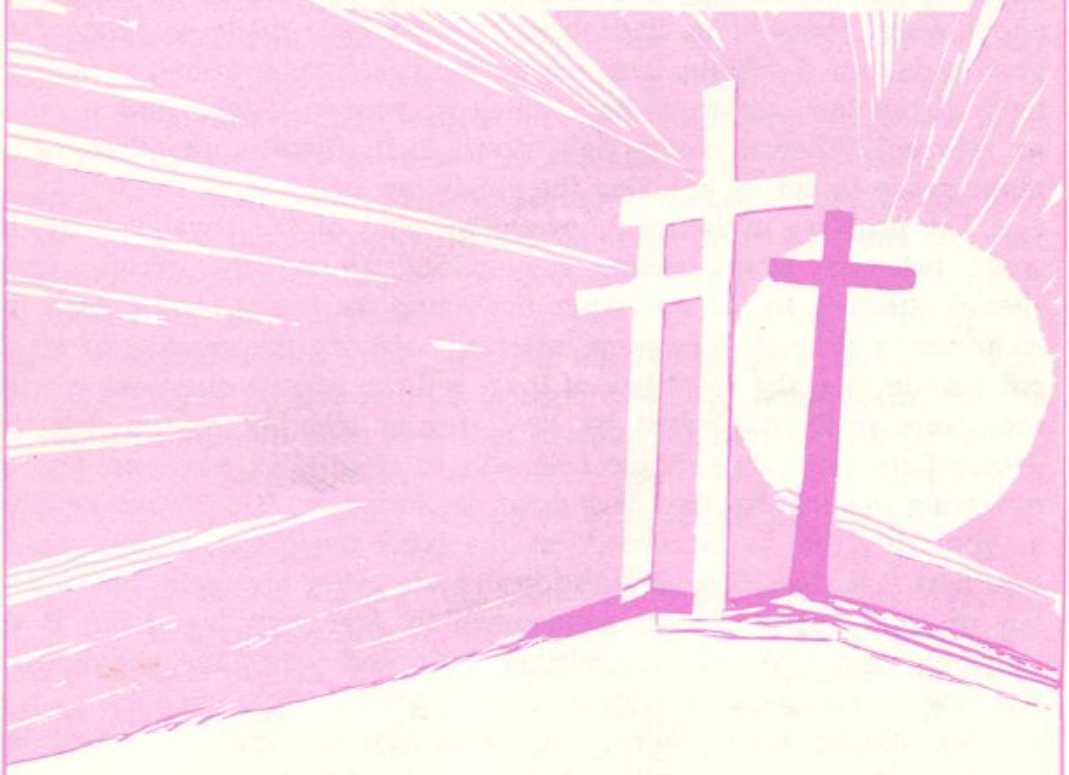
RESTORATION REVIEW



The Law of the Kingdom
(or the Royal Law)

You will be doing the right thing if you obey the law of the Kingdom, which is found in the scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself."
— *Jas. 2:8*

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Blessed are the Peacemakers . . .

PEACEMAKERS AND THE ROYAL LAW

However much we speak of believers not being under law, we are to remember that there is one law of God that is forever binding, which the Jerusalem Bible refers to as "the supreme law of scripture," but which is more commonly known as *the royal law.* It may say something about where most of us have been that we have made so little of the greatest law of the Bible. The role of the peacemaker is best seen in the light of this law, the royal law, which is: *you must love your neighbor as yourself.* When it comes right down to it, there is no other way to make peace except by applying the kingly law of love.

The problem in James 2, where we read of the royal law, is that some believers were making distinctions among themselves, giving special attention to the rich while neglecting the poor. They argued that in honoring the rich they were, after all, obeying the greatest of all the commandments, the royal law of love. But the apostle questions whether they were really motivated by love, for in catering to the rich they despised the poor. Nevertheless he says to them: "If, however, you are observing the sovereign law laid down in Scripture, 'Love your neighbor as yourself', that is excellent," as the NEB renders it. From what he says next it is clear that he questions whether they are really obeying the law of love, but are rather condemned by that very law: "But if you show snobbery, you are committing a sin and you stand convicted by that law as transgressors" (verse 9).

So, despite their claims, they were *not* honoring the royal law, which in its lofty ethic allowed for no distinctions between believers, which meant that the poor brother, meagerly clad in smelly clothes, was to be received with the same honor as the rich, who enter the assembly in fine raiment and with gold rings on their fingers. All generations, whether Christians or not, tend to say to the well-heeled, "*Please*, take this seat!," while to the poor man in rags they say, "You may stand or sit on the floor." Pride is the name of the game.

We must see here that it is *making distinctions* between God's children that violates the law of love, which is *the* law of all Scripture. There are different ways in which our sisters and brothers can be "poor people in rags," for few are *literally* like that in our churches. One may be more despised for being "a brother in error" than for being poor, or a sister may be told to sit on the floor because she speaks in tongues. Among many of our folk there is nothing worse than to be *wrong*, and so we make our distinctions between the right and the wrong. To those who are right, *doctrinally correct*, we say, "*Please*, sit here, and will you be so kind as to lead our prayer," while to our brother in error, because of tongues or organs or classes or institutions, we kindly greet and even bless with "May you be

warmed and filled," and yet give him not what he needs in terms of tender, loving fellowship. *Distinctions!* That is the sin that violates the sovereign law of the Bible.

The royal law is also called the law of liberty in James 2:12: "Always speak and act as men who are to be judged under a law of freedom," the NEB again. What is bothering James is that his brethren are seeing the commandments of God as apart from that one law that undergirds and gives connection to them all. "If a man keeps the whole law apart from one single point, he is guilty of breaking all of it," he insists, showing, as did Jesus, that all the law hangs upon love. It is, after all, the law of love and of freedom that will judge them, so it is not enough simply to obey laws that prohibit adultery or murder. Never are we so free than when we realize that love is behind every commandment and ordinance of God—"the end of the charge is love" as the apostle explained to Timothy.

The royal law is the law of Christ, or, to put it another way, the law of Christ is the law of love. "Help one another to carry these heavy loads," we read in Gal. 6:2, "and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ." Gal. 5:14 identifies the law of Christ as the law of love: "For the whole law can be summed up in a single commandment: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

The royal law is also the perfect law of James 1:25. When one looks into the mirror that reflects the love of God as manifested in Jesus, he sees the force of "the perfect law, the law of liberty," and thus measures his own sinful self, so void of that love. If he is not a hearer that forgets, but a doer that works, he will be blessed in his doing of love. In seeing Christ in the mirror, we see how love makes us accepting, forgiving, and forbearing. By his Spirit we are more and more transformed into his loving image, from one degree of radiant holiness to another, as 2 Cor. 3:8 says.

This is what is happening to many of our folk these days. Only last week a brother from a distant state sat in my livingroom and told how he had at last learned the law of love and that he now was a maker of peace among his fellows. Rather than to argue with his brethren as he had long done, with all its attendant enmity, he now sought to be with them only in an atmosphere of love. He told of visiting with one brother who had been conditioned to argue at the drop of the hat, and who would drop the hat if need be. "I am not here to argue with you," he explained, "I simply want to be with you and enjoy you as my brother." This kind of peacemaking, motivated by an adherence to the royal law, can be contagious.

My visitor made one point, rather forlornly, that lingered with me. *Why,* he asked, *are we so slow to learn what religion is all about?* But has this not always been the case in organized religion? On more than one occasion Jesus urged those who knew the law

virtually by heart to learn the meaning of what Hosea had said, “I desire mercy rather than sacrifice.” They too had missed the point of religion.

It is like boys slipping in under the canvas wall to see their first circus. They made their way around the periphery and saw the sideshows, but, ignorant of the way of circuses, they left unaware of the three-ring event under the big top. They saw the sideshows but missed the main event! To miss the main event, James is telling us as he points to the royal law, is “to be guilty of breaking the whole law.”

This is the fruit of the Spirit, *love*, which issues from a pure heart. Gal. 5:22 shows that the Spirit’s fruit, not fruits, while singular manifests itself in many ways: joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, fidelity, gentleness, and self-control. The love hymn of 1 Cor. 13 is similar, revealing love as a many-splendored thing. But above all it is the Spirit’s fruit and not our own work as if by our power or might. What a line the apostle gives us in Rom. 5:5! Let it burn into your soul: *God’s love has flooded our inmost heart through the Holy Spirit he has given us.*

The Bible speaks only of love as fulfilling the law, and this more than once, which explains why an apostle would refer to it as the supreme or royal law. As the NEB puts it in Rom. 13:8: “He who loves his neighbor has satisfied every claim of the law.” He goes on to say that the Ten Commandments and all other commandments are summed up in this one rule, *Love your neighbor as yourself.*

He goes on in the next chapter to seal the work of the peacemaker: “If a man is weak in the faith you must accept him without attempting to settle doubtful points” (14:1). Ah, doubtful points! What mockery we make of the royal law of love because of them! He goes on to say more than once that we are not to judge one another, for it is before his own master that each of us stands, and so we do not have to sit in judgment of each other. And what a question he lays on the entire church in verse 10: “You, sir, why do you pass judgment on your brother? And you, sir, why do you hold your brother in contempt?”

When we accept each other as sisters and brothers *because* we all belong to Him, and not on the basis of party, and thus realize that the kingdom is a matter of love, peace and joy and not sectarian politics, we hear the apostle say: “He who thus shows himself a servant of Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men.”

He wraps it all up in Rom. 15:7: “In a word, accept one another as Christ accepted us, to the glory of God.”

When we do this we look into the mirror of God’s royal law and. go away remembering how God loved us in accepting us while we were yet sinners, and thus we do the sovereign law by accepting each other on the same basis.

If you cut it any other way you are going to have a sect or a country club or something beside a community of love, which is what it is all about.—*the Editor*

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OUR TOWN AND YOUR TOWN

Beside the fact that our little city has two state universities it is probably a typical American city for its size, and most of us who live here do not expect more than that. Our problems and possibilities are not all that different from where you reside. Most of our towns and cities are microcosms, more or less, in that they are miniatures of what goes on in the larger world, especially our own nation. We are not to forget, of course, that we belong to those nations of the northern hemisphere that comprise only one-third of the world's population but possess 83% of its wealth. It is easy for one living in Denton, Texas in 1979 to be oblivious to the fact that two billion people in the world are in raw poverty.

Our city has its drama, so that even from where we sit one can get a view of "the church in the world," which is the concern of at least one theological journal that comes to me from afar.

I was near our courthouse square a few weeks back purchasing some typing cartridges when I noticed a house ablaze only a few blocks away, in a section of town where two-story houses, once elegant, have been converted into multiple units, our "inner city" if we have such. There was that fleeting urge to hasten to the scene and be a bother to the emergency crew, which I could easily have done since the alarm had just sounded. I could have been at the scene as soon as the fire trucks and well before the police cordoned off the area. But my better judgment prevailed. I recalled how some psychologists theorize that we are inclined to "run to fires" from an instinct that goes back to our ancestors in primeval forests when fires were caused by lightning strikes.

I don't like to stand and gawk at someone else's tragedy, so I don't become part of the audience at highway accidents and I stay away from fires, unless I have reason to believe that I can be of help. In most instances we can be of help by staying out of the way of those who are trained and equipped to render aid. I learned that lesson as a young man when I joined a massive crowd atop a railway underpass. A Mexican wanderer had been run down by a freight train and his body was strewn in pieces for hundreds of yards along the tracks. One of the trainmen shouted angrily to the sightseers, *If you gawkers will get out of the way we'll gather up this man's body.* I have never forgotten that stinging rebuke, so I stay away from that kind of entertainment.

But I learned from our local paper that there was more drama at that fire than one would suppose. A five-year old child died. Her older sister heeded her mother's call and jumped into the arms of firemen from the second floor window, but she was afraid to jump. They found her body at the top of the stairwell. The fire was caused by a dry Christmas tree that should have long since been removed. As I read the story I could feel a tithing of the mother's agony as she pleaded, probably all too frantically, for her baby to jump, and her distress when the child disappeared from the window into a big house full of fire. And the child's fear, distress, and bewilderment. I found myself hoping that the smoke rendered her unconscious before the flames did their evil deed

The God of heaven knows about Denton, Texas, of course, and He loves our little children like He does those in your town. And He knew all about that fire and a family's distress. And of course He could have caused the child to jump, or made it possible for a fireman to reach her. Or better still, He could have caused the dry tree to have been removed, or kept it from catching fire. And we would never have known that He intervened, and so we have no way of knowing how often He *does* intervene. Had He intervened the child would have lived on to maturity, presumedly, and what then? Maybe Socrates was right that it is better to die young than to live in our kind of a world, for some people at least.

I do not have a satisfactory theodicy, as the thologians call it, which is an answer as to why !he innocent (or the guilty for that matter) have to suffer. I accept in child-like trust (sort of) what I cannot understand or explain. I believe that that little child is somehow and somewhere within God's enfolding love, and that the purpose that He has for that soul will in His own good grace be realized. It is God's world, after all, and His purposes, however apparently thwarted by moral and natural evils, will eventually be accomplished.

Well, we have even that kind of drama and trauma in Denton, Texas, where you might suppose that nothing happens much, and it gets even more intense than that. If I went back enough years I could tell of the college girl who was delivered to her dormitory by a taxi and then disappeared forever. It was late at night, and the driver took her fare and presumed she entered the dorm. There was no one around that he noticed. That was a generation ago and they still don't know what happened to her. But they know what happened to another of our coeds who was last seen as she entered her car on the parking lot. They found her mutilated body on a lonely road, as was the case of a little girl who disappeared one peaceful Sunday afternoon from a hamburger place. They found her body in a gravel pit near Dallas but not her abductor.

Only yesterday the police spotted four suspicious looking men inside a building. They were illegal aliens that had come to our little city all the way from the Mexican border. Their picture made the front page of our paper, showing them hauled away by the police, though they had committed no crime, save illegally entering our country in quest of employment. They were turned over to immigration authorities. What kind of country have we when we have to build walls and fences and station guards to keep people *out* while some countries do those things to keep people *in?*

The church is in our microcosm, and we believe that fact makes at least some difference. At our congregation on the Sunday following the tragic fire it was revealed that someone in our number had touched the life of the mother, a divorcee, who already had enough problems in her life without further tragedy. The Body remembered her in our prayers and someone was asked to call on her to see in what way we could be of help. We learned that her church and others responded to the tragedy so overwhelmingly that there was little left to be done.

Even as I write these words at high noon there are peacemakers at work bearing hot meals to shut-ins all over the city. There are many, many believers in this city who are mindful of the poor, the aged, the lonely, the disturbed, the sick, and the youth. I could name those that I know personally whose lives are full of good works, folk who do not let their left hand know what the right hand doeth.

It may not all be good. In our uneven world right here in Denton there is a Church of Christ that only this week announced that it had “marked” a sister church, one in Dallas, because it had veered from the faith, and thus proclaimed her as un-OK and not worthy of the goodwill of the faithful. Her wrong? She is cooperating with “the denominations” in reaching out to the untouchables in her not-so-little and not-so-nice world. But even here there are signs of change, for even within this church there are voices that are asking the right people the right questions, such as *Now that we presume to pass judgment on our sister churches, not only in Denton but now also in Dallas, where does our jurisdiction end? Will we soon sit in judgment upon all churches everywhere, deciding who* is *and who* is *not worthy of fellowship?*

This is to say that in our lovely little city “the company of the committed,” which is larger than you might think, not only has the world to reach out to with love, but the church as well.

It probably is not all that different from your town.—*the Editor*

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Pilgrimage of Joy. . . No. 34

YEARS OF CHANGE

W. Carl Ketcherside

The time has come to try and describe the four most formative years of my life. They were years of change, of study, deep meditation and fervent prayer. They were years of fear mingled with faith. In them I came closer to God than I had ever drawn before. Actually, this period had begun on that Easter Monday in 1951 when I spoke at the little village of Ahorey, in North Ireland, at invitation of the Presbyterian leaders. I stood on the platform where Thomas Campbell had ministered before coming to America.

However, I returned to the United States to engage in debates with brethren. The heady excitement of combat in the forensic arena made it impossible for me to study deeply or to think clearly about the will of God for my future life. But between the years of 1953 and 1957 a great transformation took place.

Out of it came my article “That They All May Be One” in the January issue of *Mission Messenger* for 1957, and the even more trenchant “Thoughts on Fellowship” in January 1958. These were the initial public presentations of the thoughts which had begun to lodge in my heart. They represented my crossing of the Rubicon, the burning of my bridges behind me. They were the first guns fired in my commitment to an unrelenting war against sectarianism, and especially against my own.

During those years I learned the stern discipline of research and study. I read every word of the five volume Lard’s Quarterly, the seven volume Christian Baptist, and as many bound volumes of the Millennial Harbinger as were available to me. It became apparent to me that we had departed so far from the original spirit and intent of the restoration ideal that it was a travesty upon justice to claim that we were the same movement. It soon became obvious to me that no splinter of the movement was the one holy, catholic and apostolic church of God upon earth, and that all of our fragmented groups taken together did not constitute the body of Christ in its fullness.

I was able to distinguish between the body as a divine organism conceived in the mind of God, and movements within it launched by the thinking of men like Luther, Calvin, Wesley, Campbell or Stone. It became apparent that the first great error of the heirs of the reformers was the equating of the movement with the Lord’s church, thereby adding another religious party or sect to the already overburdened landscape. I became convinced that we had not achieved the original purpose of uniting the Christians in all of the sects. The magnificent myth which had driven us on relentlessly to war against all sectarianism but our own was the fantasy that we were exclusively the body of Christ upon earth. It was

a solemn thought to me that I had brothers and sisters meeting behind other signboards, and that we were saved by a Savior and not by a signboard. My growing conviction led to the article “The Sheep on the Hills.” I could see that God’s flock was scattered and not yet gathered.

I was led to investigate within their context every scripture I had ever employed to justify division among the saints of God. It was a frightening experience. As I read Amos 3:3; 6:5; Romans 16:17; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, and other such passages and saw how we had wrested them, I began to wonder if I had ever been right upon anything. One after another my usage of such passages was taken from me. I began to mistrust my judgment. I was driven to my knees and sought the understanding of God’s will with tears. I wept much to realize that at the very time when I thought I was serving him I was actually dividing his children by my interpretations. It was several years before I wrote the first edition of my book “The Twisted Scriptures” but all of the time the Spirit of God was illuminating me as I surrendered more and more to His claims. I was driven to him by loneliness for in those days there was no one else to whom I could talk.

It was a difficult thing to overcome pride and ambition. I had been for so long a recognized leader of a faction in the religious complex that I sought for some way to hold on to my past and maintain integrity with the present. One day, after months of introspection I sat down at my desk and wrote, “I have been in the wrong about fellowship all of my life. Today I renounce that wrong. I will no longer try to make my increasing knowledge consistent with my past teaching. That teaching was in error.” I recall as if it were yesterday how I felt when I read what I had written. It was as if fetters had been struck from my mind. New insights began to flood my soul so fast I could hardly write them down. It was as if a dam had broken inside me. I have never felt quite so clean and pure as I did that day.

People began to write and tell me I had changed. To them that was the unpardonable sin. They equated our past position with the will of God and to leave our feeble human thought and go on to greater heights was forsaking the truth. They would quote for me things I had written in the past and ask me if I still believed them. To all of them I wrote, “You are right, I have changed, and as I learn new truths I will change again. I have signed my declaration of independence from all of the errors of the past, and I shall pray that God will open up your heart to renounce yours as I have mine.”

I resolved that I would never again debate publicly with any brother. I would never again represent any party, sect or schism. I would never again allow myself to be selected and thrust forward by the partisans of any school of thought to defend their opinions and deductions. I would stand or fall to my own Master and I would allow all others to do the

same. It came as a great relief to realize that never again would I have to spend weeks trying to figure out what an opponent might say and how I would parry his thrust. Since the moment I made my promise to the Father that I would never again debate, I have become increasingly convinced of the folly of attempting to arrive at truth or alleviate division by such a ridiculous procedure. If a community is not divided before a debate it will always be after one is held. The very psychology of our modern debating is divisive.

As I studied the past it became evident that men like myself who had learned new truths always made two errors. The result was an intensification of the sectarian spirit. In the first place, they left where they were and went with those who had taught them the new truth. This took the new truth out of the place where it was most sadly needed and put it in a place where it was already present. I resolved not to go anywhere but to stay where I was, regardless of what happened. If I could not serve God among those whom I knew best I would not be liable to do so among others.

Secondly, those who learned new truths usually tried to bind them upon others. In their joy at learning something meaningful to them they wanted to press it on everyone whom they met. Their new brainchild meant so much to them they wanted everyone else to become pregnant immediately. This always caused cleavages in the body. I resolved to share my ideas but never to allow them to become dogmas. I was resolute in my determination never to form a clique or club. As I wrote in my paper, I refused to be bought off or scared off and expected to remain where I was for the duration.

I urged all others to stay where they were until driven out. It appeared to me that the way to unite was to unite. The way to halt division was to stop dividing. It seemed sensible that if everyone remained where he was this would preclude the formation of new parties, and while this would not lessen the number it would freeze them at the present level. It was my conviction that time would heal many of the breaches and bridge many of the chasms. In any event, the formation of new parties or sects, or the changing from one party to another would not achieve the purpose of God. To shift from one party to another does not eliminate problems. It only subjects one to new and unfamiliar problems with which he is not by experience qualified to deal.

I did not feel it was proper for me to continue without informing the brethren with whom I was laboring of my radical change of thought. The elders agreed to set up six two-hour periods on successive Saturday evenings and invite all who wished to come. I was to speak an hour and then answer questions from the audience for an hour. The meetings were well-attended and orderly, although somewhat tense. I loved and respected all of the brethren. I knew how they felt. I had taught them what they believed and had led them in

its implementation. Now I was occupying the same speaker's platform to tell them I had been wrong.

I discussed with them the name of the church and told them it had no official title. The primitive *ekklesia* represented the called-out ones and they were known, not by a title, but by their love for one another. They were identified by where they met, and we should name the place so we could find them geographically, but not name the church to distinguish it from other believers, for that meant to denominate it.

I dealt with the "five steps to salvation" and showed that we were not saved by climbing a little ladder into the kingdom. Rather we were drawn up by an "escalator." We simply took the step of faith and the grace of God, as an unseen power drew us up into repentance and immersion into the precious Lord. It was His power and not ours which accomplished His purpose and we never left the faith we had in the beginning to go on to the next step.

I discussed the nature of worship and showed the folly of "five acts of worship" when everything that one did on earth under the sovereignty of Jesus was an expression of worship. Under Jesus there are no holy places, holy days or holy things, but only a holy people. I discussed the nature and composition of the one body and showed that it was composed of every person on earth who had answered the call of God. We should not ask people, "Which church are you a member of?" because there is only one. There never has been another and never will be. Our purpose should be to receive all whom God receives and as He received them.

I showed the difference between the gospel and the doctrine. The gospel consists of seven historical facts. The testimony to these must be believed. The doctrine consists of a course of instruction. It refers to that which is taught. It requires understanding and rationalization. We are saved by faith, not by how much we learn and know, but by whom we know. It was also pointed out that God probably did not respect any of our lines of demarcation and division because He did not create them. We liked them because they gave us a sense of security, but it was a false security based upon human opinion.

We did not lose a person. I am working today with the same congregations with which I have always worked. And I am welcome in hundreds more. Through the grace of God, with few exceptions, the places where I had worked outgrew their narrow and inclusive views in the Saint Louis area, and are as comforting to me as I try to be to them as we grow older in years and in the faith.

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OUR TRAGIC FALLACY
(and the way out!)

Ouida and I were in Athens (Texas) during part of a recent weekend to visit with her devout mother. She is one of the most respected women I have ever known, and she is something special to me since she conned me into marrying Ouida. But she is not the subject of this essay, certainly not one entitled as this one is! Mothers-in-law may sometimes be tragedies or fallacies, or both, but not this one. It is rather about her preacher, the minister of the Church of Christ only a few blocks from her apartment, where she has been a member as long as I've known her, through thick and thin. But even the preacher is not the tragic fallacy, but is rather part of the answer to what I consider our most debilitating hangup: our sophomoric notion that we can't have anything to do with other churches.

Larry Davidson is his name and he did a "first" in the history of the Church of Christ in Athens on a recent Sunday night. As a part of the local ministerial association, Larry was the opening speaker in a week-long "union meeting," designed to bring some of the great truths of Scripture to the attention of that little East Texas town. His subject was the creation, and he showed that God's love was demonstrated in the things He made for man's good. He was followed on successive nights by ministers of other churches in town, though some would not participate. There is another mainline Church of Christ in town, representing a division some years back, part of the thick and thin referred to above, that did not participate, but neither did they oppose it, which is something. The affair was held at First Baptist, which was enough to gain the frowns of some of the dissenting Baptists. We are not the only ones who do little or nothing about the unity of the church. We only talk about it more than the others do!

It is not yet evident how much flak this will bring Larry, but the important thing is that he has the approval of his own congregation. All others would do well to mind their own affairs, a lesson that our folk are dull of learning.

The tragedy that I refer to is that such an event as this, calculated only to foster goodwill and cooperation between believers is virtually non-existent among our folk. We are separatists and exclusivists, supposing that such a cooperative endeavor signals an endorsement of all the errors we have always associated with "the denominations." That is the fallacy. And as fallacies go, we are woefully inconsistent.

If we can check in at a Methodist hospital, do business with a Baptist bookstore, and sing hymns composed by Roman Catholic bishops, why can't we visit our neighbors at the Baptist church for a few nights and allow some of the local ministers to share with us their findings from God's word? If I can allow a Roman Catholic nun to empty my bedpan and

bathe my sick body at a hospital without endorsing Roman Catholicism, why can't I sit with a priest of that church and listen to what he has to say, and with the same kind of love that nun shows me in her ministry?

But we are told that the hospital is not a "doctrinal" matter, and that when we go to a "denominational church" and hear them preach we are partakers of their evil deeds. But are not the hymns we sing "a doctrinal matter"? And a look at our preachers' libraries will reveal rather heavy dependence on the likes of Adam Clarke, Albert Barnes, and the *Pulpit Commentary,* if not Elton Trueblood, William Barclay, and Keith Miller. Do our preachers endorse everything that these men stand for when they draw from their writings? And not just the preachers, for we are all dependent on those we uncharitably call sectarians, not only for the hymns we sing, but for our books and Bibles as well. Most every translation we use was a labor of love of some denominational organization.

Indeed, the very culture that we prize, which is usually referred to as our Jewish-Christian heritage, is ours only because of the sacrificial labors of other Christians. We are benefactors of all of church history and are a part of its victories and defeats, particularly of the American church. Even our own Church of Christ-Christian Church forebears realized this debt and were at the forefront of cooperative efforts. We have in our Movement one of the first church mergers, between the Stone and Campbell churches, and that between groups that had rather substantial differences. Our folk were among the first to issue a modern version of the New Testament, which was basically the work of "denominational" scholars. When the ecumenical movement was born our folk were among the pediatricians who assisted in its birth, without supposing they were endorsing everything "ecumenical." Except perhaps for the most recent past, in "Church of Christ" history, our heritage is not one of exclusivism, isolationism, bigotry, and sectarianism. In coming to this position we are guilty of a tragic fallacy.

The fallacy defies all logic, and I here and now challenge the whole cockeyed argument. Pray tell me by whose logic are we guilty of other people's sins and errors simply because we cooperate with them in areas where we agree. A reference to such injunctions as "Come out from among them and be ye separate" only reveals our abuse of the very Book we claim to uphold, for that refers to paganism and not to a meeting at the Baptist church where *all* the speakers hold forth Jesus as the Savior of the world. We are no more guilty of their erroneous views by cooperating with them than they are guilty of our false views in their willingness to be with us—and we *do* have our shortcomings, do we not? We must pray for those among us who presume our infallibility, which is surely a far worse sin than joining in a prayer session with Roman Catholics and Episcopalians.

What a perversion it is, not only of logic but of all that is Christian and decent, for us to talk about unity, preach about unity, write about unity, pray about unity, and then adamantly refuse to have anything to do with other Christians. What a glaring inconsistency it is for us to be part of a unity movement and yet isolate ourselves as much as if we were alone in a vast desert. If we were truly unitists, our first concern would be the church nearest us, which may well be across the street or in the same block, be it Presbyterian, Episcopal, or even Mormon. If we were truly unity conscious, we would look for some way to cooperate, if not in preaching the gospel then in feeding the poor and clothing the naked, or in the war against crime, pornography, and the drug traffic in our cities.

What kind of logic is it that says that if we cannot cooperate in *everything* then we can cooperate in *nothing?* The demons of hell have sold us a bill of goods when we buy the line that in loving and accepting Presbyterians and Pentecostals we love and accept everything Presbyterian and Pentecostal. There is a great deal that is eminently Christian in all the churches about us, and there is far more that we share in common, particularly with mainline Protestants, than we have been willing to admit. We must even come to the stubborn truth that some of our neighbors are more Christian than ourselves and are more committed to what is really vital than we are.

The way out? The first step is to want out, to realize that our isolation from other believers is a serious and aggravated wrong, as well as an insult to those who are in fact our sisters and brothers in Christ. We are only to be pitied so long as we suppose we are the only Christians. When we get our want-to fixed, the opportunities to correct our wrong will be abundant. There is good news from Athens only because somebody wanted out. I am convinced that the vast majority of our people want out, but lack the leadership to express it.

It pleased me to learn that our people and the Baptist folk, as well as other believers, were gathering at the Baptist church to hear one of our preachers expound the Scriptures. And then to hear other preachers. They mixed and mingled with each other, as sisters and brothers ought, *in church* as well as at the grocery store and the bank. They sat next to each other, touched each other, and shared a common faith, which is what Baptists, Methodists, Pentecostals, Episcopalians, Disciples of Christ (all these were in on it) and Church of Christ folk ought to do, not because they are so many denominations, which the God of heaven doesn’t care about anyhow, but because they share the greatest truth ever conveyed to man, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

It is surely the most important thing that has happened in Athens, Texas since Mother Pitts asked me when I was visiting her church, if it would be too much trouble for me to deliver a typewriter to her daughter who was in college in Denton, for Denton is not all that far from Dallas, is it? What a beautiful contrivance that turned out to be!

Never sell short the glory that was Athens!—*the Editor*

Five great enemies to peace inhabit with us: viz., avarice, ambition, envy, anger, and pride. If those enemies were to be banished, we should infallibly enjoy perpetual peace.—*Petrarch*

Peace is rarely denied to the peaceful.—*Schiller*

In His will is our peace.—*Dante*

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WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN YOUR LEADER GOES TO THE PRESBYTERIANS?

One of my friends is always saying that we need not be disturbed if the Restoration Movement comes upon hard times since God still has plenty of Presbyterians with which to start another one. It could be added that such ones might well include some of our own number who have recently joined the Presbyterians. I know of two of our brightest young men, both honor students in Bible at Abilene, who have in recent years become Presbyterian pastors.

But neither of them was our leader. What *do* you do when your *leader* joins the Presbyterians? It is now a known fact, even if our press has been conspicuously silent about it, that Athens Clay Pullias, longtime president of David Lipscomb College, has gone to the Presbyterians. Lipscomb is not only the leading Church of Christ institution in Tennessee but one that enjoys world-wide influence, and its president, certainly in the person of Athens Clay Pullias, is the leader of Tennessee churches as well as one of the most influential men in larger Church of Christ circles. All these years he has been a defender of the faith, a protector of the true church, and an exposer of those who veer from the Old Paths, such as the Belmont Church of Christ in Nashville. He was so loyal to the truth that

he disciplined his faculty members who chose to attend Belmont. But lo, he who once kept the faith has departed from it. He has gone, not to Belmont, which is after all still within Churches of Christ, but to the Presbyterians.

As my Ouida has a way of saying when the impossible happens, *Well, what do you know about that!*

It is just as well that brother Pullias is not on the faculty at Lipscomb, for he would have to be fired since it is a sin to become a Presbyterian. It is at least as bad as drinking wine (for which a professor was fired at a Church of Christ college in Texas, ostensibly at least) and almost as bad as becoming "charismatic" (for which folk have been fired all over the place). In fact, President Pullias would have to fire Presbyterian Pullias, just as he fired a dedicated teacher who chose to cast her lot with Belmont. It is interesting, is it not, how our deeds of yesteryear sometimes return to haunt us?

Due to a quietness like that inside a tomb it is not yet evident what "those who are somewhat" in Nashville will do about brother Pullias. Those in the editorial office of the *Gospel Advocate* have not been silent about the Central Church of Christ in far off Irving, Texas, which has chosen to indulge in a cooperative effort, not only with Presbyterians, but with numerous churches. The *Advocate* was quick to judge Central as having departed from the faith. Since they have presumed to issue such judgments, they might attend to a matter much closer to home. What are they going to do with their leader who is not only cooperating with "the denominations" but has gone over to them? Will he be disfellowshipped? Written up?

While this is not a problem to me, I think I have a responsibility to remind our leaders (many of them at least) that this is a problem to *them*, whether they do anything about it or not. If we are going to be so sectarian and oppressive as to stigmatize and browbeat every preacher and church that veers from the party line in the slightest degree, then we ought to hang the same washing on the line when it involves our most eminent leaders. If the *Advocate*, for instance, can muster sufficient mercy to allow the Pullias affair to lie like a sleeping dog (or is it politics?), then why pick on some well-meaning brethren like those in Irving, Texas who only wish to honor Jesus Christ?

Our leaders in Nashville and elsewhere have been less than gracious to Don Finto and the Belmont congregation, who have impressed the world that Christians *do* care for the downtrodden. For being a different kind of Church of Christ they have, for the most part, been rejected by those who should have welcomed them as a refreshing change. Those who control the power structures can afford to sacrifice the Don Fintos and the occasional Belmonts, as a warning to others if for no other reason, but also as punishment for veering from the party line. But Don Finto, as able as he is, was not one of our college presidents,

and Belmont was not David Lipscomb College. What *do* you do when your leader "departs from the faith"? Nothing perhaps, when it is politically expedient.

When I say this is no problem to me, I simply mean that I do not conclude that a brother necessarily rejects Christ when he leaves what we call the "Church of Christ." Going to the Presbyterians might be a matter of conscience, not a lack of it, an act of faith and not faithlessness. Even though I went through the same course of study as their ministers (a classmate of mine at Princeton *is* now the Stated Clerk!), I could never become a Presbyterian. I prize my heritage as a "Christian Only," and I cannot be run off or scared off, and certainly not bought off. So I choose to remain among Churches of Christ, where I am not fully accepted, than to go to the Presbyterians, where I would be accepted. But some of my sisters and brothers differ with me, and so some of them become Presbyterians or something else, having had it with the Churches of Christ.

They are still my sisters and brothers and I love and accept them no less. I even understand, for it may be the only thing they can do in their search for warmth, acceptance, and usefulness. I sincerely wish for them a blessed peace and ministry, and this goes for Athens Clay Pullias. I do not believe, of course, that the United Presbyterian Church is *the* church of Jesus Christ, but neither do I believe that what we call the Church of Christ is *the* church of Jesus Christ. We are Christians and we please God, not on the basis of being Presbyterian or "Church of Christ," but by our fidelity to him who brought life and light to mankind through his resurrection from the dead. The Body of Christ is made up of all those who are in Christ, wherever they may be. If being somewhat tarnished by a sectarian environment, which is presently the character of the entire Christian world, keeps us from being faithful Christians, we can only conclude that there are very few faithful Christians, if any.

Those who have a problem with their leader going to the Presbyterians are those who harass and badger those who are not their leaders, those that they can afford to sacrifice for the good of the party. But when the party leader defects, what do you do?

An honest confession might be good for the soul and for the party. Some of our folk, even our leader, might be better off among the Presbyterians. They might actually be closer to Christ than when they are with us, as impossible as that may appear. They may be *less* sectarian than when with us. Our partyism may be so stifling to them that they have no choice but to leave. They did not find us "the true church" after all, not even as our leaders when they mouthed the same shibboleth. Let us learn by such defections and try to be a more responsible people, or simply accept the fact that moving from one denomination to another one is not all that momentous anyway.

So let us remain loving and accepting to the likes of Athens Clay Pullias, but let us be the same toward our own folk who choose to be different. Let us encourage innovation (change), diversity and variety among our own people. This will provide for such elbow room within the "Christian Only" tradition that people will not have to leave.

But *if* we are going to be rude and crude toward the rank and file preachers and churches who vary from our unwritten but demanding creed, then why not respond the same when the leader snaps his heels and makes a bold exit? Should we not be consistent, even if it does embarrass certain people and institutions? Should we not "defend the faith" when we cannot afford to as well as when we can afford to? Are we going to make distinctions between those who "depart from the faith," excommunicating the weak and excusing the strong?

Since Nashville has all the answers, they'll have no problem with these questions?

What *do* you do when your leader goes to the Presbyterians?—*the Editor*

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OUR CHANGING WORLD

Enos Dowling, longtime dean at Lincoln Christian Seminary, was recently asked in an interview with the *Christian Standard* if he had hope of a better relationship between the Christian Churches and "the acappella brethren," to which he replied: "With some, there is hope; with some, there is no hope. I've had mixed reception from the acappella brethren—some would refuse to recognize me as a brother in any sense and accord me little or no hope of salvation; and, on the other hand, some accorded me recognition as a fellow Christian. With them I have and do enjoy a sweet and wonderful relationship."

President Pearson of Andover Newton Theological Seminary wrote a word in *Today's Ministry*, published by that institution, that touched my heart. I wrote and told him so, and I pass it along to you. Quoting Joseph Conrad in reference to living in a world of misadventures, he said, "Facing it, always facing it—that's the way to get through. Face it! That's enough for any man!" He went on to say, "God loved the world, and so must we. Not selected aspects of the world congenial to ourselves, but simply and wholly the world." How insightful that is! We are all inclined to carve out that part of the world that we want to love, while we remain oblivious to the rest. But God loved the world, not a select part of it.

Motivated by the Guyana tragedy, William D. Brown, writing in *The Christian,* suggests some tests for a healthful church, one of which especially impressed me: a church should cooperate with other churches; such interaction makes it more likely that it will be reality-oriented. Other tests: Are members abused by the group for any reason? Does a church feel that its answers are the only ones and that its uniqueness is based on some divine right?

The West Main Church of Christ in Medford, Oregon in its bulletin recently identified the church as a hospital. Noting that a hospital is a place of healing and not of death, it stated, quoting Maurice Hall: “It is a hospital for repairing the social, physical, mental and spiritual ills of every person.”

One of our readers sent us a news item out of David Lipscomb College with a picture of a class of 65 preachers in its Preacher Training Center. Circled in red (by the reader) were two women sitting among all the men, with Bible and notebooks before them like all the rest. The writeup did not make it clear whether the women were among “the 65 preachers” or not. If so, we can look forward to more attraction in Tennessee pulpits ere long!

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READERS' EXCHANGE

I know, as I question myself, that I’m not much of a peacemaker, though God knows that I want to be such. Long have I wanted to start a prayer group which would do nothing but gather to pray for the unity of Jesus’ disciples, and someday I may do such a thing. If such a thing gained momentum, I believe it would do much toward unity. —Chester Lamberth

The *Review* helps in keeping me from getting too narrow and gives me a Kingdoms view of things. *—Ron Lake, Louisville, IL*

I belong to the independent Christian Church, but like you I long for the time when we can unite on the Bible and put away all our petty prejudices and devote our energies to winning people to Christ. *—Walter J. Ross, Loon Lake, WA*

I would like to have some of your tracts “Body Ministry” to take to hospitals and to put in letters.*—Mrs. Jo Grady, Jacksonville, AR*

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BOOK NOTES

F. F. Bruce is one of those writers who is always worth reading. His *The Time is Fulfilled* is a study of Old Testament themes fulfilled in the New. My favorite chapter is "Our Father Abraham," based on Rom. 4, which shows how all believers, not just Jews, came to be called children of Abraham and why. 3.45 postpaid.

A delightful little volume by Charlie Shedd is only for 100 million Americans—our *overweight* community. Twenty years and 125 pounds ago the author asked God to remove his—mountain of flesh, and the book, *The Fat Is In Your Head,* is the result. He calls it "the odyssey of a fat man who lost a ton." The important thing is that he discovered a life style to keep it off, and he believes you can too. If you don't need the book, you have a friend who does. 2.20 postpaid.

All who take our history seriously should own a copy of *The Memoirs of Alexander Campbell,* which has already increased in price to 19.95, but we have a boxful at the old price of 17.95 and will send you one upon request. This is two volumes in one, a beautiful reprint job. Robert Richardson, the author who originally issued the book at a financial loss, would be pleased.

Especially for our sisters, young and old alike, we suggest for good reading: *Daughters of the King* by Pat Brooks, which is a call for women's freedom in the framework of Scripture, 2.45; *Joni*, a gripping story of a young woman's struggle against quadriplegia and depression, 4.45; *I Love the Word Impossible* by Ann Kiemel, whose testimony on forgiveness will warm your heart.

If you want a *shelled* presentation on what the millennial theories are all about, then *The Meaning of the Millennium,* edited by Robert Clouse, is your book. He has proponents of premillennialism, dispensationalism, postmillennialism, and amillennialism to present their views and then respond to each other. Very informative. 4.70 postpaid.

When moving please send us *both* your old and new addresses and as soon as possible. If the post office has to inform us of your move, our policy is to remove your name from our files.

Now that we have increasing numbers of oldsters we are in constant search for books that speak to the possibilities of old age. We are impressed with *You Don't Have to be Old When You Grow Old* by a woman, Florence Taylor, who has authored a score of books.

She shows how old age can be approached with courage and a zest for living that can lead lonely senior citizens from self-absorption to usefulness. Only 3.40 postpaid.

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